

REMARKS

Claims 54, 69, 79, 92, and 95 are currently amended to clarify the invention without acquiescence in cited basis for rejection or prejudice to pursue in a related application. The other claims remain unchanged. No new matter has been added.

§ 103 REJECTIONS

Claims 54-96 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being anticipated by Dieckman, D. et al., “DISCOE: Distributed Design and Analysis to Preserve Intellectual Property” (hereinafter Dieckman) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,636,853 issued to Stephens, Jr. (hereinafter Stephens). Applicants respectfully traverse.

I. For claim 54, the Office Action acknowledges that “Dieckman does not specifically disclose ranking . . . to the . . . user nodes.” The Office Action concludes, however, that Stephens discloses the above claimed limitations. Applicants respectfully agree that Dieckman does not disclose the above claimed limitation of “*ranking the one or more integrated circuit design resources based upon a prior activity of a user*”, but Applicants respectfully disagree that Stephens discloses this claimed limitation.

Applicants respectfully submit that Stephens does not disclose, teach, or suggest the claimed limitation of “*ranking the one or more integrated circuit design resources based upon a prior activity of a user*” of claim 54.

Stephens discloses a method for representing and navigating search results from a database on a computer system. **Abstract.** More specifically, Stephens clusters the retrieved information in response to a user input into groups “based on selected characteristic information” by using the k-means clustering algorithm. **Col. 2, ll. 23-35** and **col. 7, ll. 52-61**. That is, Stephens clusters and ranks the information in response to a search query based upon the user’s input as well as the parameters used in the clustering algorithm.

Nonetheless, Stephens' ranking / sorting method is not based upon a prior activity of a user. As presented immediately above, Stephens' ranking and sorting algorithm is based upon user's input and the parameters of the clustering algorithms. More specifically, Stephens discloses that the user input comprises "keywords," "key phrases", logical / proximity operators between them, data source to search, and a query indicating information desired from the data source. Col. 7, ll. 30-37 and col. 2, ll. 23-27. None of these above items may even be remotely related to a prior activity of a user on the portal; rather, they merely represent where to search for the desired data and what data are being searched.

Moreover, in Stephens, another information which may also contribute to the ranking / ordering of the information in response to a search query is the heuristics and parameters of the clustering algorithm. As Stephens discloses, these parameters may include "a search threshold, a maximum number of search rounds, and a maximum number of search iterations per round, . . . the maximum number of blocks per column, and font sizes and color schemes, The clustering algorithm then determines each group based on one or more categories of information such as a combination of 'size and date' and 'same author and price'." Col. 8, ll. 17-27. However, these items also cannot be reasonably correlated to prior activity of a user because they are either related to the search criteria or they merely impact how the returned results will be displayed to the user.

As such, Applicants respectfully submit that Dieckman and Stephens neither alone or combined disclose, teach, or suggest at least the above claimed limitations of claim 54 and thus may not be used to preclude the patentability of claim 54 under 35 U.C.C. § 103(a). Claim 54 is thus believed to be allowable over Dieckman and Stephens.

II. Claims 69 and 79 respectively constitute the computer program product and the system claim reciting similar limitations as does claim 54 and are thus believed to be also allowable over Dieckman and Stephens for at least the foregoing reasons.

III. All the other claims depend directly or indirectly from claims 54, 69, and 79 and are thus also allowable over Dieckman and Stephens.

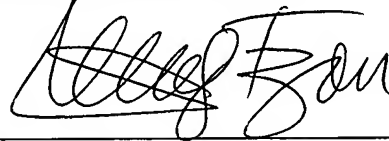
IV. Applicants further respectfully submit that there was no motivation to combine the teachings of Dieckman and Stephens. Applicants further respectfully submit that the Office Action's conclusion that "[i]t would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Dieckman and Stephens . . . " constitutes impermissible hindsight. The fact that Dieckman is absolutely silent on clustering the search results into any groups or displaying the results in any order would render the combination of the teachings to constitute impermissible hindsight or at most obvious to try. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that Dieckman and Stephens may not be lawfully combined.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the above remarks, all claims are believed to be allowable. If the Examiner has any questions or comments, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the number listed below.

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Respectfully submitted,
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